

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 161807 TOSEC 060026

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S E C R E T STATE 161807 TOSEC 060026

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: MORGAN ABDUCTION

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SITREP NO. 7 SUMMARIZING MORGAN
ABDUCTION CASE AS OF 1930 HOURS, EDT, JULY 9, 1975:

THE DEADLINE FIXED BY MORGAN'S KIDNAPPERS PASSED AT 1400
EDT WITHOUT ANY APPARENT CHANGE IN THE SITUATION. EMBASSY
BEIRUT'S CONTACTS WITH THE LEBANESE THROUGHOUT THE DAY IN-
DIATED A CONTINUING HIGH LEVEL OF ACTIVITY BY THE
LEBANESE WITH PLO ELEMENTS. THE LEBANESE, AND TO A LESSER
EXTENT AMBASSADOR GODLEY, REMAINED BASICALLY OPTIMISTIC
THROUGHOUT THE DAY. ACCORDING TO A LATE UPI REPORT, HOW-
EVER, LEBANESE OFFICIALS SAID EARLY THURSDAY THEY HAD GIVEN
UP HOPE OF NEGOTIATING MORGAN'S RELEASE AND CONSIDERED HIS
LIFE IN DANGER.

THE PLO IS REPORTED TO HAVE ISSUED AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT
IN LATE AFTERNOON, BEIRUT TIME, BUT THERE ARE CONFLICTING
REPORTS ABOUT ITS SIGNIFICANCE. THE UPI SAID THAT THE PLO
ANNOUNCED FAILURE IN ITS EFFORTS TO SECURE MORGAN'S
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PAGE 02 STATE 161807 TOSEC 060026

RELEASE. ACCORDING TO UPI, THE PLO NAMED THE PFLP GENERAL

COMMAND AND THE POPULAR STRUGGLE FRONT AS MORGAN'S CAPTORS.
THE EMBASSY WAS INFORMED BY THE LEBANESE ABOUT THE PLO

STATEMENT, BUT REPORTED THAT LEBANESE OFFICIALS CONSIDERED IT A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD BRING PRESSURE ON THE KIDNAPPERS TO RELEASE MORGAN. (THE TEXT IS STILL AWAITED FROM EMBASSY BEIRUT.)

AMBASSADOR GODLEY MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TAQLA ABOUT 1600 BEIRUT TIME. DRAWING ON HIS INSTRUCTIONS, HE ASKED IF THE LEBANESE COULD ARRANGE A DELAY IN THE DEADLINE. TAQLA'S REACTION WAS POSITIVE, AND HE SAID THAT HIS SECURITY PEOPLE SHOULD DEVISE WAYS TO GET THE WORD TO THE KIDNAPPERS. GODLEY ALSO SUGGESTED, AS HIS PERSONAL THOUGHT, THAT THE US MIGHT AT SOME FUTURE DATE RELEASE THE KIDNAPPER'S LETTER, EVEN OVER THE VOA, ONCE MORGAN WAS SAFE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER DID NOT REACT.

THE CONFLICTING IMPRESSIONS GIVEN BY REPORTS FROM BEIRUT MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO JUDGE THE CURRENT SITUATION. GODLEY FELT AFTER HIS MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT THERE WAS NOTHING FURTHER THE US COULD DO AT THIS TIME. A MAJOR QUESTION IS WHETHER THE PLO WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK MORGAN'S RELEASE OR WHETHER, AS THE UPI REPORT IMPLIES, IT ABANDONS THE EFFORT AS A FAILURE.

NOTE: THE PFLP-GC IS A MARXIST-LENINIST, PRO-PEKING GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 200 HIGHLY DISCIPLINED GUERRILLA FIGHTERS, LED BY AHMED JABRIL. IT IS A PART OF THE REJECTION FRONT. THIS GROUP WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MASSACRE AT QIRYAT SHEMONA IN APRIL 1974 AND CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MURDER OF THE ISRAELI MILITARY ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON ON JULY 1, 1973. END TEXT. INGERSOLL

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